
SHROPSHIRE FLORA GROUP

Newsletter
September 1995



Crassula helmsii

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The Shropshire Flora Group

The Flora Group is a voluntary organisation of amateur and professional botanists called together by the Vice-County Recorder of the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI). The function of the group is to research the distribution and ecology of the plants and vegetation of the county, and to publish the findings in occasional books and atlases.

We have a close association with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, the BSBI and the museums in the county. The Group is largely funded by the Leighton Committee, which comprises the editors of the Ecological Flora of the Shropshire Region and senior officers of the Wildlife Trust. We also receive funding and support from English Nature, the Shrewsbury Museums Service and, most importantly, from the contributions in time, effort and resources of the members.

The Flora Group has over 50 members; the following have specific roles:

- ❑ Ian Trueman is vice-county recorder for Shropshire;
- ❑ Sarah Whild is the Flora Group co-ordinator;
- ❑ Alex Lockton is the information manager;
- ❑ The following are 10km co-ordinators:-

Janet Allwood
Audrey Ashwell
John Bingham
Joan Brown
Gill Castle
Julie Clarke
John Clayfield
Ruth Dawes

Anne Dyer
Audrey Franks
Jean Hooson
Dr H. V. Hughes
Jane Ing
Sylvia Kingsbury
Tavia McLean
Rob Mileto

Pat Parker
Will Prestwood
Elizabeth Roberts
Tina Teearu
Gary Vergine
Chris Walker
Daniel Wrench

We offer training and experience in botanical survey through a series of field trips every summer and an indoor meeting in the winter. Advice and help with identification of difficult species is offered by the 10km co-ordinators as well as the county recorder and group co-ordinator. If anyone would like to join or send in records, they should contact the co-ordinator for recording procedures and standard record cards. There is no charge for being in the Flora Group, but members are expected to submit records on an annual basis.

Dear Flora Group member...

It was a chance re-reading of a chapter in the Shropshire Flora that made me realise that it was twenty years ago that the first meeting of the Flora Project was held at Preston Montford. I resisted the impulse to commission commemorative mugs, but to mark the occasion we've produced a fully-fledged newsletter rather than the usual brief missive. Our usual pre-Christmas meeting and social is booked at Preston Montford Field Centre, courtesy of Sue Townsend, the new Centre Director.

Twenty years has produced an enormous effort of botanical recording, producing the Flora in 1985, carrying on with the BSBI monitoring scheme and a rare plants re-recording scheme, culminating in Rare Plants of Shropshire, published this year. Now the pressure is on again, filling in the gaps for the new Atlas of the British Isles, to be published, hopefully, around 2000. And if that's not enough, we are hoping to publish a book on Shropshire's sedges and their allies sometime in the new year.

This year we have had more field meetings than usual, most of them very well attended. Thanks to everyone who turned out to brave the elements and collect so many records. All information now goes straight onto our computer database thanks to Alex, who has computerised all of our post-Flora records and nearly all pre-Flora records, giving a total of over 150, 000 plant records.

So, the date for the Christmas meeting is Saturday 2nd December 1995 at Preston Montford, at 2.00pm. Tea, coffee and mince pies will be provided, and the subjects for discussion will include:

- ❑ recording for the BSBI Atlas 2000
- ❑ the role of 10km square co-ordinators
- ❑ towards a book on sedges
- ❑ feedback from the computer
- ❑ dates and venues for 1996 field meetings
- ❑ a talk on identifying aquatic plants

Sarah Whild

First & Second County Records

The first sightings of new plants in each vice-county are collected and published by the BSBI. Records must be for naturalised plants (not planted or deliberately introduced). Many new records are for alien species; these are often difficult to identify and, if there is any doubt, a specimen or photograph should be sent to a BSBI referee or to the Flora Group for confirmation.

If there are any queries about this list or any records that we may have missed out, please get in touch. It is particularly difficult at the moment for us to sort out first county records, as the C list of rare plants is half on paper and half on computer; and we are updating the nomenclature to that used by Stace.

<i>Aster x versicolor</i>	Late Michelmas-daisy
1994 SJ61 R. Stokes, 1 st	
<i>Barbarea verna</i>	American Winter-cress
1993 SJ22 J. Clarke, 2 nd	
<i>Crassula helmsii</i>	New Zealand Pigmyweed
1994 SJ53 J. Hooson, 2 nd	
<i>Echinochloa colona</i>	Shama Millet
1994 SJ41 R. Stokes, 1 st	
<i>Erysimum x marshallii</i>	Siberian Wallflower
1993 SJ22 P.Parker, 1 st	
<i>Galium x pomeranicum</i>	Yellow Bedstraw
1994 SO59 R. Stokes, 1 st	
<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>	Dittander
1994 SJ22 E. Townsend, 2 nd	
<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>	Parrot Feather
1994 SJ51 S. Whild & A. Lockton, 2 nd	
<i>Oenothera biennis x cambrica</i>	Hybrid Evening Primrose
1993 SJ22 J. Clarke & A. Franks (det. J. Bowra), 1st	
1994 SJ22 E. Roberts (det. J. Bowra), 2 nd	
<i>Setaria pumila</i>	Yellow Bristle-grass
1994 SJ41 R. Stokes, 1 st	
<i>Setaria viridis</i>	Green Bristle-grass
1994 SJ41 R. Stokes, 1st	

Progress with Recorder

Our computer system for keeping records on is called Recorder. It is the standard database for biological recording in Britain, designed and produced by English Nature and the other country agencies that were once the Nature Conservancy Council.

We have been computerising all the paper records from The Flora, and are making steady progress. Some figures might be interesting:

- ❑ B species records: 70,400
- ❑ C species records: 2,272 so far (about 1/4 of them done)
- ❑ M species records: 35,097 to date
- ❑ R species records: 885 to date
- ❑ Other plant records: 42,345 (usually site record cards)
- ❑ Records of other taxonomic groups: 51,183 - mostly birds

This gives a total of over 200,000 records, either tetrad-based or linked to one of the 2000 sites on the database. These sites are nearly all "designated" in some way - ancient woodlands, SSSIs, or whatever - although we happily add our own Flora Sites for anywhere else that we record. Members are welcome to consult the database for sites, because there is little point in filling in M cards for well-known places each year. It is preferable to do some detailed monitoring of the vegetation, as we often do during Flora Group field trips.

We hope co-ordinators will appreciate the new report format that we've devised. Here is a sample:-

		Date of last record				
Species	Tetrad:	A	B	C	D	E
<i>Acer campestre</i>		1991	-	-	1990	1994
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>		1993	1994	1995	1990	1994
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>		1979	1990	1991	1990	-
<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>		-	1976	1991	-	-
<i>Aconitum napellus</i>		-	-	-	-	1841

This should help to identify gaps in recording effort. Reports showing all species will be prepared for the most active 10km square co-ordinators.

Amendments to the Red Data List

Brachypodium pinnatum (L.) P.Beauv.

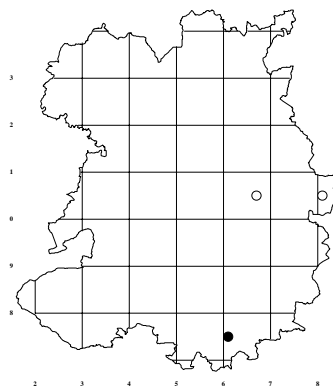
Tor-grass

Locally Rare

A limestone grassland species notable for its scarcity in Shropshire, Tor-grass is frequent on suitable soils (chalk and limestone) throughout central and southern England and as far north as southern Scotland. It is also found at scattered locations in Ireland. Where it does occur it can become dominant, crowding out other species.

In Shropshire it has been found on a roadside near Lightmoor (SJ60, 1983) and in a railway cutting near Albrighton (SJ80, 1979). The only site where it has been seen recently, though, is at Cleve Hill, SO57, where it was found in 1990.

The Atlas of the British Flora (Perring, 1963) gives a dot for SJ72, which may be from outside the county, and which is dated 1930 or later.



Alisma lanceolatum With.

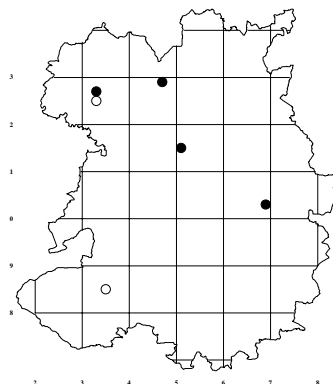
Narrow-leaved Water-plantain

Locally Scarce

There are now five sites where this species has been recorded in the county during the last decade:-

- ❑ Montgomery Canal, SJ32, 1995
- ❑ River Roden, SJ42, 1995
- ❑ Old Shrewsbury Canal, SJ51, 1995
- ❑ Blists Hill Canal, SJ60, 1995
- ❑ Coalport Canal, SJ60, 1991

It favours muddy areas of shallow water, often competing well with tall vegetation, including stands of reed sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), which tends to dominate most other species.



Narrow-leaved water-plantain can be recognised by its leaves, but this is not a certain indicator, the young leaves of common water-plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) often being similar. A more definitive character is the position of the style, which emerges near the top of the fruit in lanceolatum, and half-way down in *plantago-aquatica*.

Ranunculus penicillatus (Dumort.) Bab

Stream Water-crowfoot

Local status unknown

This species has now been found in the River Roden (SJ51, 1995), growing in shallow water in riffles over gravel. It is fairly frequent, being found with *Myriophyllum spicatum*, *Potamogeton pectinatus* and *Butomus umbellatus*. It seems likely to occur in other suitable rivers in the county, and its status can only be determined after further survey. Our specimen is *R. penicillatus* ssp. *pseudofluitans* (Syme) S. Webster.

Sanguisorba officinalis L.

Great Burnet

Locally Rare

There is no change to the published status of this species, but it has now been found growing in some abundance in relict MG4 *Alopecurus pratensis*-*Sanguisorba officinalis* flood meadows at a factory site in Telford (SJ61, 1995) and in a well-preserved MG4 meadow near Albrighton (SJ80, 1995). The former area was part of the Weald Moors, a low-lying marshy area that has been almost totally drained and reclaimed for agriculture and development. Efforts are being made to conserve this rare species in both its known locations.

Shropshire's Natural Environment

An accredited course on the ecology and natural history of Shropshire, including studies of vegetation and habitats, processes that affect them, their management and conservation.

20 weekly meetings on Monday evenings from September 25th 1995

7.30 - 9.30

at The Gateway, Chester Street, Shrewsbury

Price: £76 (£56 concessions)

Tutor: Sarah Whild

University of Birmingham
School of Continuing Studies

Ecological Flora of the Shropshire Region

C A Sinker, J R Packham,
I C Trueman, P H Oswald,
F H Perring and W V Prestwood

Paperback edition published by
Shropshire Wildlife Trust 1991

Available to Flora Group
members from the Shropshire
Flora Group or the Shropshire
Wildlife Trust at a discount price
of £15 (normally £19.95)

Rare Plants of Shropshire

A Red Data Book of
Vascular Plants

~ 1995 ~

An account of 200 rare, extinct and
endangered species in Shropshire,
complete with distribution maps
and up-to-date descriptions of the
local and national status of these
important plants.

To be reprinted Autumn 1995.

£3.50 to Flora Group members.

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Shropshire Flora Group at the
address on this newsletter